



WAKE COUNTY



Smart Start

# Building Bright Futures Together

2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT



# Letter from the Board Chair



Dear Wake County Smart Start friends,

As we reflect on the 2023-2024 fiscal year, I am inspired by the collective impact we've had on the lives of young children and families in our community. Together, we've made significant strides toward our mission of investing in young children, their families, and a connected early childhood system that prepares them for school and life ahead. We've expanded programs, deepened partnerships, and celebrated milestones, creating a stronger foundation for children and families to thrive.

One of this year's highlights was the continued success and expansion of our Wake ThreeSchool program, which doubled in size for the 2023-2024 school year. This innovative, play-based program serves 3-year-olds who face barriers to early education, giving them essential skills for success both inside and outside the classroom. In June, we were thrilled to launch our inaugural Block Party and Resource Fair, a community engagement event which gathered over 1,500 children and families to celebrate early childhood, participate in fun activities and connect with vital programs and services. This event was a powerful reminder of how important it is to be engaged with and supportive of the community we serve.

We also worked to strengthen our relationships with community partners. We hosted our first annual *Funded Partner Gathering*, held our second annual *Pre-K Application Event and Resource Fair*, and reinforced our role as conveners of Wake's early education network through initiatives like the Kid Connect Tours and the

Wake Early Childhood Action Plan. Additionally, our partnership with Advance Community Health has been key in expanding access to essential health services for young children, ensuring that our families also have the resources they need to support their children's health and well-being. These efforts, and many others, are helping build a stronger early education system in Wake County.

While we've made great progress, we recognize that there is still much to be done. Public funding levels do not meet the demand for early education in Wake County. To ensure every child has access to the opportunities they deserve, Wake County Smart Start remains committed to advocating for increased private investment in early childhood education. With support from the private sector, I am confident we can build a brighter future for all of Wake County's children.

This year's achievements highlight the power of collaboration and our shared commitment to nurturing the growth and development of young children. I am deeply grateful to all our stakeholders for their hard work and unwavering dedication to our mission. As we move forward, I am excited about what's to come and the lasting impact we will have on the future of our community.

Warmly,

**Katherine Williams**

*Wake County Smart Start Board Chair*

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Investing in Young  
Children, Families  
and a Brighter  
Future Together

# Mission

Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) invests in young children, their families, and a connected early childhood system that supports and prepares them for school and life ahead.

# Vision

Together as a community, we envision a bright, prosperous future for Wake County where all young children are happy, healthy, and able to reach their full potential.

# Our Priorities





# What We Do

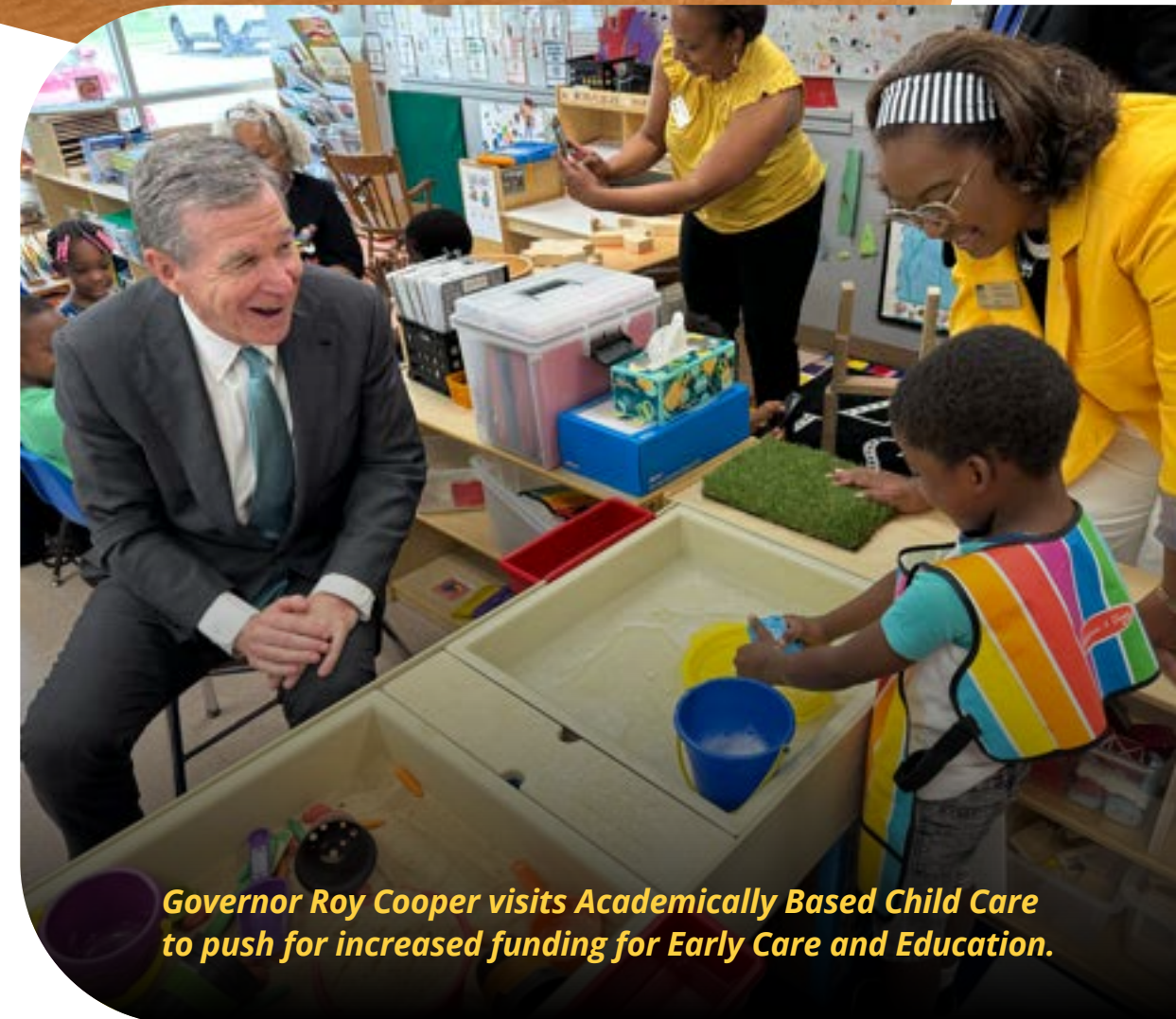
We provide early education programs, expand access to high-quality child care, fund local organizations and connect families to essential support services. Most importantly, WCSS serves as a convener, bringing together community partners such as education providers, healthcare, and early intervention services to create a comprehensive support system for children and families. Our work focuses on five key areas:

- **Preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds**
- **Quality Child Care + Healthy Initiatives**
- **Home + Group Support**
- **Early Literacy**
- **Program Funding**

# Case for Support

Reaching children in the first 2,000 days of life, during their most rapid period of brain development, leads to a lifetime of improved outcomes including:

- **Education:** Creates better outcomes in education
- **Health:** Improves physical & social-emotional health
- **Income:** Increases lifelong employment & family income
- **Workforce:** Creates a pipeline for a well-trained workforce
- **Financial Benefits:** Reduces future societal costs



*Governor Roy Cooper visits Academically Based Child Care to push for increased funding for Early Care and Education.*



# Community Connection Events

## NC Pre-K Application Event & Resource Fair

On July 15, 2023, we held our NC Pre-K Application Event, now an annual event for our agency! This year, we expanded it by introducing a Resource Fair featuring 12 community agencies sharing early childhood resources and services for families. We were also excited to highlight many of our NC Pre-K sites, which offered hands-on learning activities. A special thank you to our premier sponsor, Project Catch, for contributing food, Kindle giveaways, an inflatable jump rental, and an event DJ. Partnering agencies included Wake Up and Read, which provided free books, WIC, which shared food assistance resources, and Advance Community Health, which offered information about medical services for families without insurance. The event was a great success, with over 146 families completing their NC Pre-K and Wake ThreeSchool applications and connecting to essential community resources.



*WCSS staff helps a family submit their NC Pre-K application.*

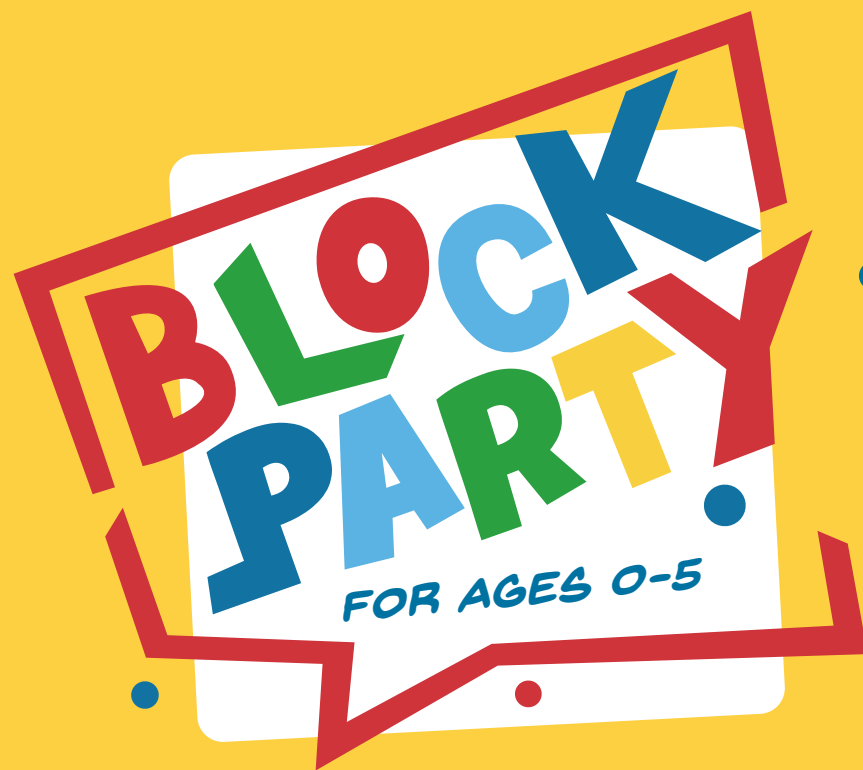


*The Wake County Public Library Bookmobile assisted families in obtaining library cards and shared library resources.*



*"The number of families who attended such an amazing event was astounding. It was great to be able to connect with so many community agencies and resources for families and children."*  
- Community





In June 2024, we held our inaugural WCSS Block Party, focused on early childhood, at Roberts Park in southeast Raleigh.

**Over 1500 children and their families** attended and enjoyed a day of community, interactive activities and connection to early childhood resources in Wake County.

Planned with support from community leaders, the goal of the event was to bring

together families, raise awareness of Wake County Smart Start, and provide access to local, early childhood resources. The Block Party also featured a variety of activities including a story walk, yoga, cooking demonstrations, a basketball clinic, touch-a-truck with community helpers, and a resource zone with 29 informational vendors. The day started with a sensory friendly hour, a calming zone was offered throughout the event, Diaper Train distributed diapers and Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC donated food.

We are incredibly proud to have hosted the WCSS Block Party, an event that brought the local community together and welcomed all. We look forward to making this an annual event for years to come.



*"It was so nice to see all the different types of families together in one space."*

- Parent



*"...er of attendees was amazing turnout and to share the joy of y with so many d partners."*

Partner



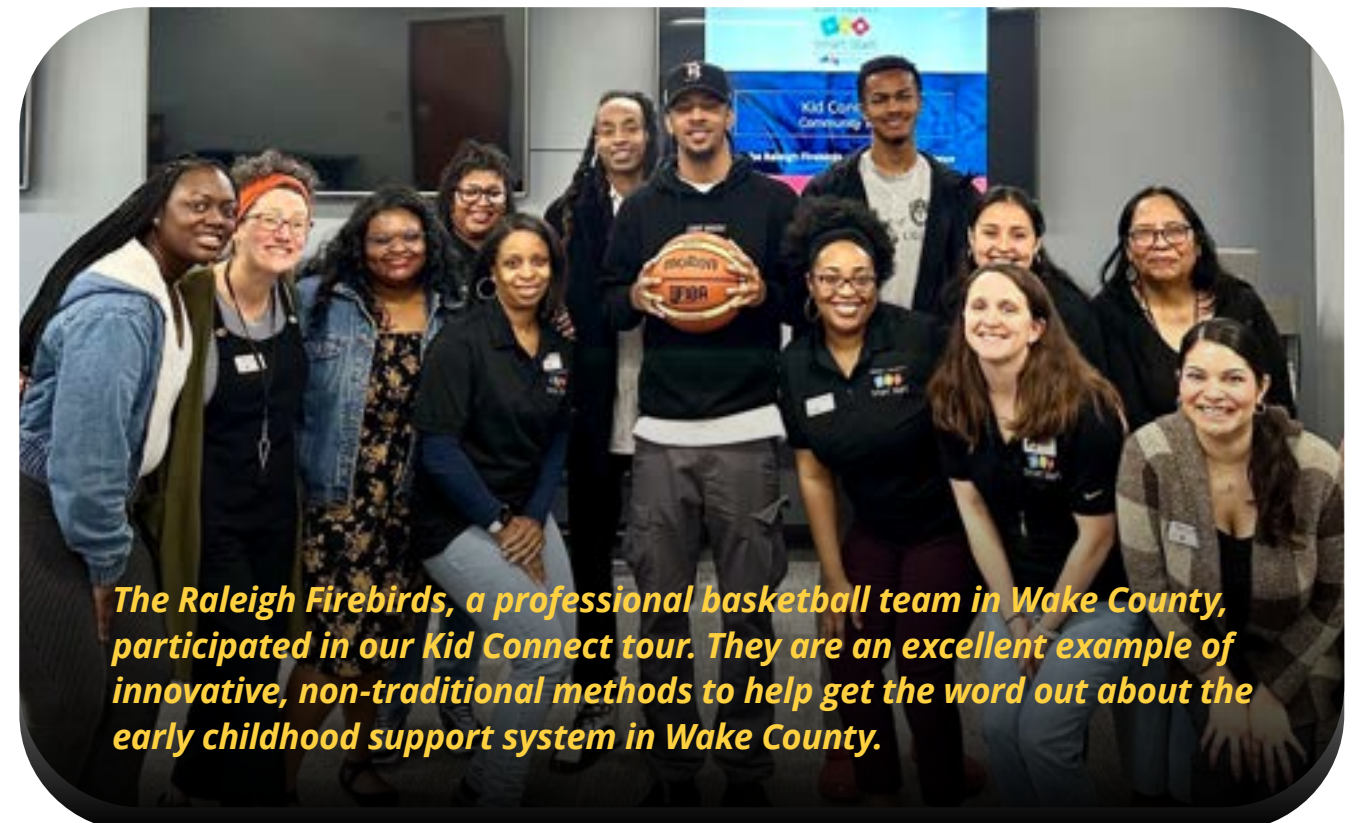
# KID CONNECT

Kid Connect is designed to build lasting partnerships with community leaders and organizations to connect underserved Wake County children to early childhood programs and resources. The program provides education and guidance on accessing vital early childhood services, equipping partners with the tools they need to better support young children and their families. The initiative also serves as a bridge-builder, bringing stakeholders together to network, raise awareness about WCSS programs, and work collaboratively to help families make informed decisions about early education.



## KID CONNECT COMMUNITY PARTNER TOURS

Launched in August 2023, in response to community feedback, the Kid Connect Partner Tours aim to strengthen relationships and build trust with key community partners. These tours invite diverse stakeholders, including grass-roots leaders, faith-based organizations, board members, and other non-traditional partners, to visit the WCSS office and connect directly with program staff. Rooted in transparency and mutual support, the tours raise awareness of the early childhood system, deepen understanding of WCSS programs, facilitate data sharing, and identify collaboration opportunities. They also create space for dialogue, allowing for new perspectives on community strengths, needs, and the role of community “ambassadors” to share information with families.





## KID CONNECT FAMILY RESOURCE FAIRS

The Kid Connect Family Resource Fairs, a new addition to the Kid Connect Initiative, was created to support communities facing significant barriers to access. These tailored events bring resources directly to families by partnering with local communities to co-plan and identify their most pressing needs. The smaller scale of these events allows for more meaningful, personal interaction, helping families get their questions answered, connect with programs, and receive support.

In April, we hosted the first-ever Kid Connect Resource Fair at the Wake County Housing Authority. The event featured 10 community resource vendors alongside WCSS programs and drew an estimated 50 attendees. Designed with input from residents, the fair focused on providing resources that aligned with community priorities. Participating vendors included Dress for Success, Haven House, Fundamental Reading Center, Alliance Health, and others. This pilot event highlighted Kid Connect's commitment to meeting families where they are—bringing resources to their doorsteps, offering immediate access to support, and strengthening community engagement.



*We hosted the inaugural Resource Fair at the Wake County Housing Authority.*



# Wake ThreeSchool Expansion

Following a successful pilot year in 2022-2023, our pioneering Wake ThreeSchool program **doubled** in size for the 2023-2024 school year. This play-based, early learning program is designed to support Wake 3-year-olds who face significant barriers to early education. Wake ThreeSchool helps children develop crucial social-emotional skills, overcome learning challenges and build a strong foundation for Pre-K and Kindergarten. Thanks to the generous, financial support of the County Commissioners, we've been able to expand the program and increase the number of children served. However, to fully meet the demand for the program in Wake County, private investment is crucial to help bridge the funding gap and ensure every child has access to this life-changing opportunity.



***In the News!***

***CBS reports on the Year 2 expansion of Wake ThreeSchool at Wanda's Little Hands.***





“

*“Since enrolling [in Wake ThreeSchool], we’ve seen a significant improvement in her English language skills. It’s been amazing to observe how her vocabulary has expanded and how much more confident she is in communicating in English, which isn’t her first language. The immersive environment and daily interactions have greatly facilitated her language development.”*

- Nahed Abu Zaid  
Wake ThreeSchool Parent, SY 23-24





# Dorothy

STUDENT

NC PRE-K, WAKE COUNTY SMART START

## *Remarkable Growth: Dorothy's Transformation in NC Pre-K*

When Dorothy Cosentino entered the NC Pre-K program, she was highly dependent on her mom and struggled with social-emotional skills. She had difficulty connecting with others and avoided physical contact. However, as the year progressed, Dorothy made remarkable strides—forming friendships, gaining social-emotional skills, and even learning to hug her teachers. She also developed academically, mastering the alphabet, numbers, and smooth classroom transitions. By the end of the year, Dorothy earned the “Most Improved Overall” award.

Her growth was especially meaningful given her autism diagnosis. Each achievement, no matter how small, was a success for Dorothy and her mother, who faced the challenge of raising two young children after the loss of her husband. Every milestone in the program was an important step forward, preparing Dorothy for success in kindergarten and life ahead.



EVERY MILESTONE  
IN THE PROGRAM  
WAS AN IMPORTANT  
STEP FORWARD



# The Holland-Faison Family

## FAMILY PARTICIPANTS

### BABY STEPS / LITTLE STEPS, FUNDED PROGRAM

## *The Power of Community and Support*

Ashley, a single mother of five, wanted a fresh start when she enrolled in programs at StepUp Ministry. Facing unemployment and housing instability, Ashley needed support. What she found at StepUp Ministry changed both her life and the life of her 5-year-old daughter, Makenzie.

Makenzie, once shy and reserved, flourished in StepUp Ministry's *Little Steps*. With a safe space to play, explore, and build friendships, she grew more confident and outgoing. "It's been incredible to watch her grow," says Ashley, proud of her daughter's transformation.

For Ashley, knowing Makenzie was in a safe, nurturing environment allowed her to focus on her own growth. The support from StepUp Ministry, including case managers and practical resources, helped her navigate challenges. "I feel secure and supported, and that's everything to a mother like me," Ashley reflects.

Today, the Holland-Faison family is thriving. Ashley's resilience continues to inspire others, while Makenzie embraces life with newfound excitement. Together, they are real-life proof of the transformative power of community and support.

*"I feel secure and supported,  
and that's everything to a  
mother like me."*

— Ashley





# Maria, José, & Ana

## **FAMILY PARTICIPANTS, HOME VISITING SERVICES** **CRianza con Cariño, SAFECHILD**

Maria, her husband José, and their three-year-old daughter Ana arrived in the U.S. in 2023, seeking a better life. By April 2024, Maria found herself arrested and separated from Ana due to misunderstandings of U.S. child safety laws. A fine for an improperly secured car seat and briefly leaving Ana unattended in the car led to charges of child neglect and a restraining order, keeping Maria away from her daughter. As a result, Ana became anxious and withdrawn, and José had to quit his job to care for her.

Homeless and overwhelmed, Maria joined the Crianza con Cariño program. Despite feeling guilty, she engaged fully in every class. Although Ana's emotional state worsened, with support from the Crianza con Cariño team, Maria learned about child safety laws she wasn't aware of, common for many immigrant parents. Crianza also connected her with a therapist and provided José tools to comfort Ana. Additionally, they advocated for Ana's emotional well-being with Child Protective Services and the courts, and after nine sessions, the restraining order was finally lifted, allowing the family to reunite.

Today, Maria, Ana, and José are healing and thriving as a family. When José chose to join the program, it further strengthened their bond. Their story demonstrates that Crianza con Cariño is more than a parenting program—it is a lifeline, providing guidance, compassion, and unwavering support during challenging times.





# 2023-24 At a Glance

## PROGRAM AND SERVICE REACH

1,616



**4-year-olds** served by Wake Pre-K in **110** classrooms at **60** facilities across Wake County.

271



**3-year-olds** served by Wake ThreeSchool in **16** classrooms at **16** facilities across Wake County.

564



**Linkages made** for family support through Wake Connections which connects families to home visiting programs, group support and community resources.

2,625



**Children served** by our **18** early childhood funded partners.

**300** Families participated in **parent support groups or classes**.

**316** Families received **services at home** to promote developmental growth and well-being of young children.

**284** Children received **case management services**.

## IN THE COMMUNITY

39



**Provider and educator trainings** held to improve child care quality, including healthy initiatives.

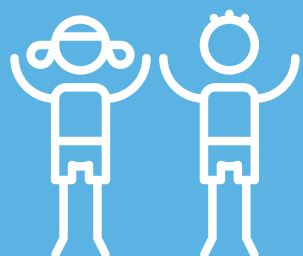
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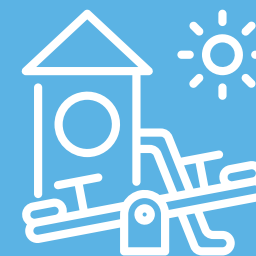
**Outreach team events** where we connected with families to promote education, literacy and other programs.



## OVERALL



Wake County Smart Start **served nearly 40,000 children** in fiscal year 2023-24.



**82%** of child care facilities in Wake County benefited from our programs.



# Wake Tech Apprenticeship Program

We are proud to be a key partner in the Wake Tech Apprenticeship Program, part of Governor Cooper's *Building Bright Futures* initiative, which supports students pursuing careers in Early Childhood Education (ECE). This program is a partnership between WCSS, Wake Tech Community College, and Wake County Public Schools, benefiting both ECE programs and apprentices. ECE programs receive a 50% wage match reimbursement for apprentices, while apprentices gain hands-on experience, mentorship, and education—all while earning a paycheck. The program helps increase the number of qualified ECE professionals by offering financial support and resources for both high school pre-apprentices and adult apprentices. In FY 23-24, 23 ECE programs participated, with 24 apprentices enrolled. By fostering growth in the early childhood workforce, the program ensures more families and employers have access to quality child care.



*A high school apprentice from the Wake Tech Apprenticeship Program gains valuable, hand-on experience working with young children at A Safe Place Child Enrichment Center.*



# Growing Healthy Futures: WCSS Garden Initiatives

Wake County Smart Start is helping young children develop healthy habits through our garden-focused initiatives. Thanks to funding from Smart Start grants and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) grant, we supported 29 ECE programs with grants to help them create garden spaces for growing fresh fruits and vegetables. These garden projects not only promote nutrition but also engage children in hands-on learning.

Additionally, our partner, Chef John, led 10 training sessions for ECE program staff, teaching them how to incorporate garden-grown produce into meals for young children. Through these efforts, we're fostering healthier eating habits and enriching the ECE learning environments.





# Our Funding Process

Every three years, WCSS evaluates community needs to identify programs and/or proposed models that will provide direct services to children, families, child care facilities and community organizations. These programs follow evidence-based practices, align with WCSS strategic priorities, and address established needs. We ensure that all funded programs are carefully monitored and evaluated. In fiscal year 2023-24, we are proud to have allocated \$12,945,015 to local early childhood programs.

## Agency

## Partner Program

<b>BOOK HARVEST</b>	<i>Book Babies</i>
<b>CATHOLIC CHARITIES</b>	<i>School Readiness Services for Hispanic Children</i>
<b>FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER SOUTH ATLANTIC</b>	<i>Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)</i>
<b>FIESTA CRISTIANA</b>	<i>Building Family Support</i>
<b>LUCY DANIELS CENTER</b>	<i>SecurePath</i>
<b>PASSAGE HOME</b>	<i>Resilience, Empowerment, Access for Children Experiencing Homelessness (REACH)</i>
<b>PROJECT ENLIGHTENMENT/ OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING</b>	<i>Parents as Teachers</i>
<b>SAFECHILD</b>	<i>Crianza con Cariño</i>
<b>STEPUP MINISTRY</b>	<i>Baby Steps/Little Steps</i>
<b>TRIANGLE AREA PARENTING SERVICES</b>	<i>Program for Early Parent Support</i>
<b>WAKE COUNTY SMART START</b>	<i>NC Pre-Kindergarten</i>
<b>WAKE COUNTY SMART START</b>	<i>Quality Enhancement</i>
<b>WAKE COUNTY SMART START</b>	<i>System Improvement and Public Engagement (SIPE) Family Navigation</i>
<b>WAKE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES</b>	<i>Child Care Health Consultation</i>
<b>WAKE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES</b>	<i>Child Care Subsidy</i>
<b>WAKE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES</b>	<i>Nurse Family Partnership</i>





# Advance Community Health Partnership

We are grateful for our work with Advance Community Health (ACH) in expanding access to healthcare for young children and their families. In 23-24, ACH provided health resources at our NC Pre-K Application events. During these events, ACH shared information about their medical services, offering support to families without a medical provider or insurance.



## ANNUAL COMMUNITY EVENT: Pastries with Partners



A great time was had by all at the **4th Annual Pastries with Partners** event, where our early education network came together to celebrate the incredible work being done to support young children and families in Wake County. As we continue to serve as the convener of the early education system in Wake, the event's attendance grew, reflecting the growing collaboration within our community. Special thanks to Union Special Bakery for providing the delicious pastries, and to our board members and elected officials for connecting directly with those doing the impactful work.



# Our Collaborations

## ECI Projects

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- **Resilience, Empowerment, Access for Children Experiencing Homelessness (REACH)**
  - Go NAPSACC
  - Center for Environmental Farming System (CEFS)-Farm2ECE\*
- **Wake County Cooperative Extension\***
- **Wake County Government/Food Security Office – ECE Food Hub\***
- **Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina\***
- **Natural Learning Initiative (NLI) - Preventing Obesity By Design\***
- **Wake County Apprenticeship Program – Wake Tech, Wake County Public School System, Building Bright Futures Initiative**

*\* Healthy Initiatives*



## NC PreK Collaborative Projects

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- **Wake Pre-K Collaborative: Wake County Smart Start, Telamon Head Start, Wake County Public School System**
- **Wake County Regional Centers**
  - Departure Drive Regional Center
  - Eastern Regional Center
  - Northern Regional Center
  - Southern Regional Center
  - Sunnybrook Regional Center
- **Information Sessions & Recruitment Events: Resource Partners**
  - Advance Community Health
  - WIC
  - Smiles at Sunnybrook
  - Telamon Head Start
  - NBT Soccer
  - Salvation Army- Project CATCH
  - NC Works
  - Child Care Subsidy
  - Child Injury Prevention
  - Wake County Public Library (bookmobile)
  - Crosby Advocacy Committee
  - Transition to Kindergarten Committee

## Wake ThreeSchool Projects

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- **US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)**
- **Teaching Strategies**
- **Transforming Early Childhood Education, LLC**
- **Community Partnerships, Inc.**
- **Telamon Head Start**
- **Child Care Subsidy**
- **Early Years (formerly Child Care Services Association)**
- **Crosby Advocacy Committee**
- **NC Dept. of Health and Human Services**
- **Wake County Public School System**
- **Reflective Teaching, LLC**
- **NC Div. of Child Development and Early Education**
- **Learning Together**
- **Kaleidoscope Young Children's Mental Health Collaborative**



# SIPE Collaborative Projects

## CROSS SECTOR COALITIONS / COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES

- Wake Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC)
- Wake Up and Read
- Early Literacy and Outreach Community of Practice
- Alianza Latina Pro-Educación en Salud (ALPES)
- Northern Regional Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Crosby CAC
- Western Wake CAC
- Wake Connections Advisory Committee
- Family First Community Network

## KEY COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

- Kid Connect Family Resource Fair
  - Wake County Housing Authority (WCHA)
  - Wake Forest WCHA Community
- Family Engagement and Leadership (FEL) Groups at Peach Road Cultural Center
  - Wake Up and Read
- Wake Connections Lunch and Learn: *Intimate Partner Violence and Considerations for Home Visiting Providers*  
Panelists from:
  - InterAct
  - SAFEchild
  - Lucy Daniels Center





# Wake Early Childhood Action Plan (Wake ECAP)

We were proud to have led the community-driven initiative to create a comprehensive plan supporting the growth and development of young children in Wake County, from conception-age 5. With input from over 100 community members, including families, nonprofit leaders, educators, medical professionals, and elected officials, Wake ECAP prioritizes access and aims to improve early childhood outcomes. This marks the successful completion of Phase I of Wake ECAP, a significant step forward in fostering a brighter future for young children in Wake County.



*We gathered for an appreciation luncheon to honor all those who contributed to the community-driven Wake Early Childhood Action Plan (Wake ECAP), providing a road map for nurturing the growth and development of EVERY child in Wake County, conception-age 5.*







HAPPENING NOW

**PUSH FOR AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE**



87°  
12:02

### ***In the News!***

*Congresswoman Deborah Ross holds a roundtable at Kiddie Academy of Brier Creeks to discuss the impact of American Rescue Plan Funding.*





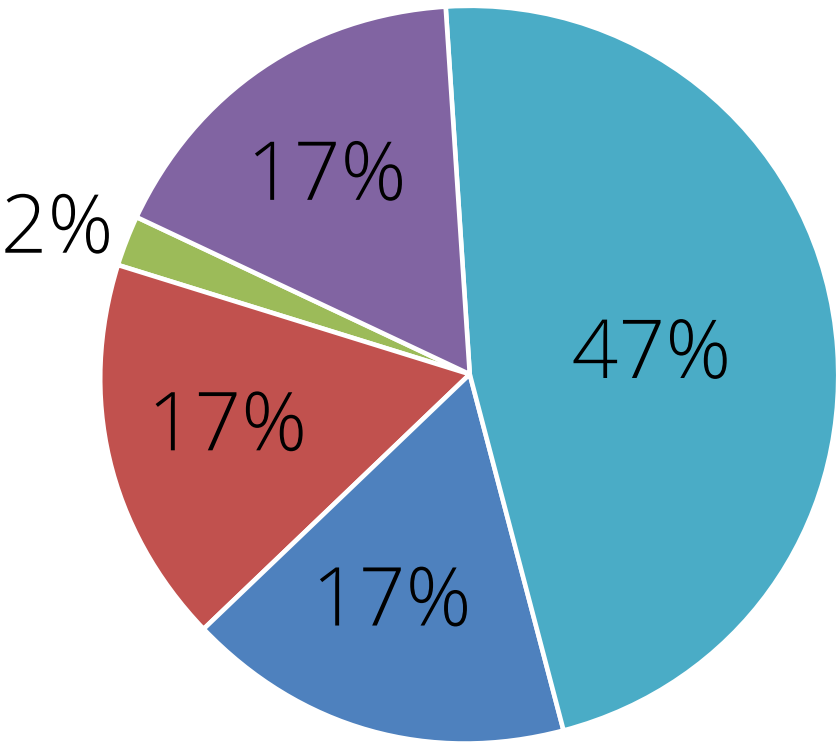
# Finances

## Wake County Smart Start Revenue FY 23/24

**TOTAL \$30,053,220\***

\*Includes \$4,983,458 of pass-through funds, Child Care Subsidy

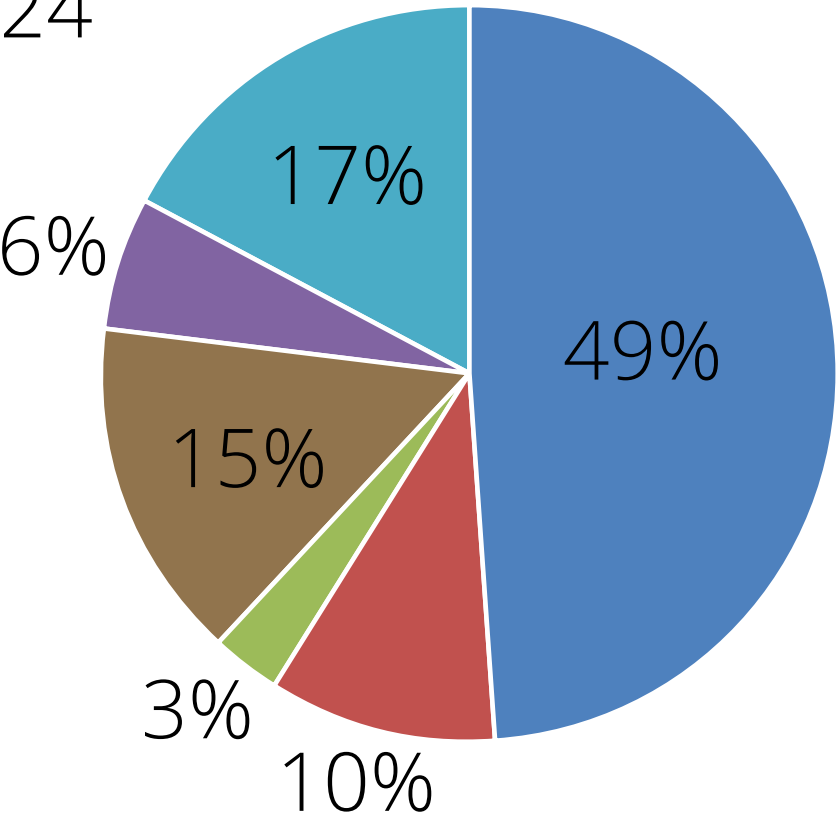
State Awards and Contracts .....	\$14,256,285
Federal Awards.....	\$5,132,990
Local Awards .....	\$5,173,828
Private Contributions and Interest .....	\$506,659
Smart Start funds, Child Care Subsidy (through Wake County Human Services) .....	\$4,983,458



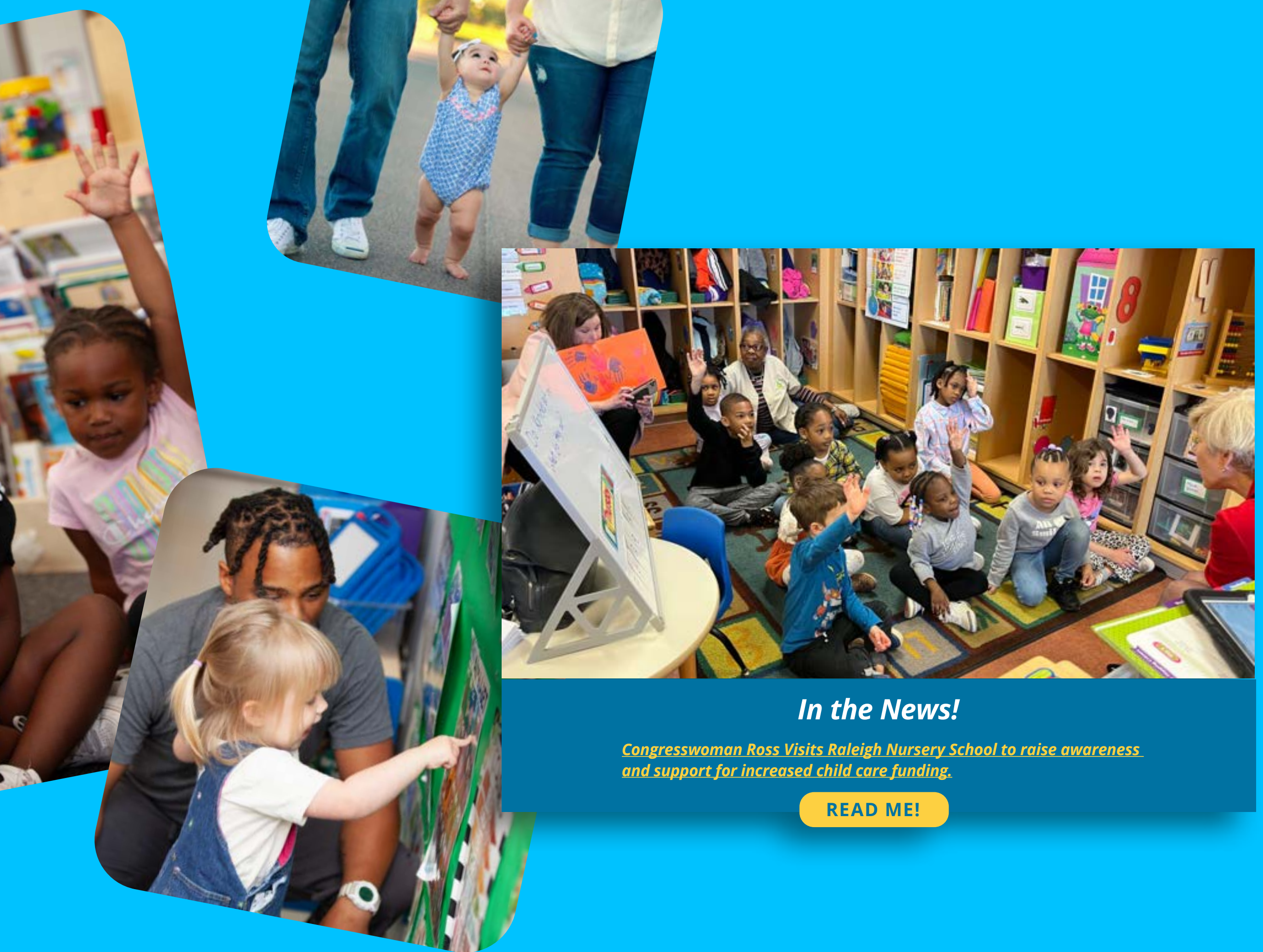
## Wake County Smart Start Functional Expenditures FY 23/24

**TOTAL \$29,947,204**

NC Pre-Kindergarten .....	\$14,715,727
Wake ThreeSchool .....	\$2,903,975
Child Care and Education Quality .....	\$838,930
Family Support/Health and Safety .....	\$4,528,767
Program Support .....	\$1,976,347
Child Care Subsidy .....	\$4,983,458
<small>(through Wake County Human Services)</small>	







## ***In the News!***

***Congresswoman Ross Visits Raleigh Nursery School to raise awareness and support for increased child care funding.***

**READ ME!**



# Moving Our Mission Forward

Our 2023-2024 year has been one of growth and impact for Wake County Smart Start, and we are excited to share the progress we've made in supporting young children and families. From expanding our Wake ThreeSchool program to hosting our first Block Party, we've made significant strides in providing opportunities for early education and community engagement. Strengthening community partnerships and improving access to essential services have also been at the heart of our efforts.

While we're proud of what we've accomplished together, much work remains. We rely on your support to ensure we can continue investing in young children, their families, and a connected early childhood system. We are incredibly grateful to our donors—your generosity makes this work possible. Please consider making a donation today so we can continue moving our mission forward. To donate, visit [www.wakesmartstart.org/donate](http://www.wakesmartstart.org/donate).



## Donors

### A

Jeffrey & Jennifer Adams  
Christine Alvarado  
American Online Giving Foundation

### B

Laura Baker  
Rep. Cynthia Ball  
Patti Beardsley  
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of NC Foundation  
Barbara Morales Burke  
Sue Bush

### C

Gary Carr  
Community Health Charities  
Nikia Coates  
Dale Cousins  
Creating Healthier Communities  
Matthew Crotty

### D

Dee Darkes  
Dorothy Debnam  
Robert & Pam Dowdy  
Heather Drennan

### E

Matthew Ellinwood  
Environmental Federation of NC  
Commissioner Susan Evans

### F

Karen Ferguson  
Robert Ferrall  
Fidelity Charitable  
Jennifer Fife  
Kacie Fletcher

### G

Matt Glova

### H

Liz Hamner  
Lisa Hartung  
David & Kella Hatcher  
Gayle & Sean Headen  
Sherry & David Heuser  
Carl Holleman  
Jessica Holmes  
Mickey & Jack Holt  
Sig & Nancy Hutchinson

### I

Gizem Imece

### J

Leslie Ann Jackson  
John Rex Endowment  
Lauren Jones



**L**

Kevin Lappin  
 Anne Clark Lau  
 LifeTime Asset  
 Management  
 Carolyn Lockley

**M**

Jennifer MacPherson  
 Arletta Marshall  
 Madalyn Marshall  
 Dr. Jim & Linda Martin  
 Dave McCarty  
 Catty Q. Moore  
 Tina Mull  
 Dr. Amelia Muse

**O**

Claudia Oviedo

**P**

Ronetta & Donald  
 Pearsall  
 Harrison & Tammy  
 Peatross  
 Antonia Pedroza  
 Holly Peloquin

**R**

RBC Foundation  
 Revelation Baptist  
 Church  
 Anita Robinson-  
 Christmas

**S**

Camille & Mark Schaffer  
 Luisa Scott  
 Dr. Michael & Jolene  
 Smith  
 Dr. Cheryl Stallings  
 Swensley Family  
 Charitable Fund

**T**

Truist Bank

**V**

Tonya Venable

**W**

Hurst & Patricia Webb  
 Joe & Katherine White  
 Taushua & Reginald  
 Wilkinson  
 Cheryl Williams  
 Katherine Williams  
 Dr. Stacey Wilson-  
 Norman  
 Lt. Col. Joe Wolozyn  
 Chris Woodling

**Y**

James Young





# 2023-24 Volunteers

## A

Angela Alger-Walker  
Bilal Ali  
Brooke Atkins  
Maryam Aziri

## B

Jan Baker  
Allison Barbee  
Krista Barbour  
Amy Barefoot  
Connie Batten  
Linda Bauer  
Nate Benton  
Deanna Bledsoe  
Kimly Blount  
Kevin Bobbitt  
Nicole Boone  
Teresa Boykin  
Gemma Brodney  
Cassandra Brooks  
Veronica Brown  
Nicole Butters

## C

Bridgette Campbell  
Anne Clemmons  
Daisy Clemmons  
Cheri Coleman  
Gloria Cook  
Kellie Cook  
DaQuanta Copeland  
Collette Copelin

## D

Dawn Dawson  
Gladys D'Estefano  
Isabel Estrada  
Krystal Grady  
Diarra Diagne  
Lacadia Dickens  
Wanda Dickson  
Lorraine Dixon



*Board member Sherry Heuser proudly displays the handmade Valentine's cards created by our ThreeSchool and Pre-K students as a heartfelt thank you to our supporters.*

## E

Ijeoma Eke  
Michelle Ezzell

## F

Crystal Felton  
Silvia Medina Fernandez  
Marta Forbes  
Wanda Fowler  
Corrine Fulp

## G

Kaleah Gaddy  
Hugo Gallo  
Jasher Garbutt  
Dunebari Gininwa  
Kim Girourard  
Matt Glova  
Diane Griffin  
Camerina Guzman

## H

Petra Hager  
Angela Harding  
Taylor Harris  
Dejah Headen  
Sean Headen  
Krystal Helms  
Holli Hemby  
Ana Maria Hernandez  
Evelyn Hernandez  
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Melissa Hodges  
Latasha Hopkins  
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Lisa Horton-Burt  
Caroline Hundley



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**L**

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Tsegga Medhin

Calvin Mitchell

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Ellie Morris

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**N**

Lottie Naylor

Maria Nelson

Jesse Norris

**O**

Joy Othoo

**P**

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Laura Price

Wendy Price

Lola Pedron

Geraldine Pelaez

Valerie Person

Eric Pugh

Jazmine Pugh

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Sarah Quaint

**R**

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Kyle Reese

Berta Rice

Sade Richardson

Autumn Robertson

Roneil Robinson

Sara Rubin

Tiffany Russell

**S**

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LeAnne Simpkins

Sabrina Slade

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Joy Smith

Marissa Smith

Chris Stapleton

Aviva Starr

Reverend Hershey

Stephens

Stacey Sullivan

Julia Swanner

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Lisa Terry

Christy Thalheimer

Annette Thomlinson

Kristin Thornburg

Lidia Tiller

Nyla Tiller

Laura Tirado

Takesha Trapp

**V**

Alika Vail

Claudia Vazquez

Tonya Venable

**W**

Dillie Wagley

Willi Webb

Claudette West

Shannon White

Shantel White

Katie Whitehall

Shanice Wilkins

Antionette Williams

Katherine Williams

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Gina Soceanu

Giovanni Torres

Taushau Wilkinson

Natasha Williams

Taylor Young



*Gayle Headen and Commissioner Thomas at the Wake State of the County 2023, **Better Together**. Gayle participated in a panel discussion on the power of local partnerships.*





# 2023-24 Board of Directors

**Christine Alvarado**

East Coast Migrant  
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**Nikia Coates**

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**Ronetta Pearsall**

Little Hands N Feet  
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**Antonia Pedroza**

Wake County Human  
Services

**Colleen Roache**

Wolfspeed

**Cheryl Stallings\***

Wake County Board of  
Commissioners

**Tonya Venable**

NC Head Start, Telamon  
Corporation

**Joe White**

NCSU Libraries

**Katherine Williams**

NC Cooperative Extension/  
Wake County Center

**Stacey Wilson-Norman**

Wake County  
Public School System

\* Cheryl Stallings is  
an alternate member

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS, JULY 2023

**Ronetta Pearsall** *(Center-Based Child Care Provider)*

Ronetta Pearsall has over 23 years of experience in Early Childhood Education and is the Owner/Director of Little Hands N Feet Child Care Center in Raleigh, an NC Pre-K site since 2016. She has professional and volunteer experience in board governance with a focus on advocacy, communications, data evaluation, human resources, racial equity and strategic planning. Raised by a single mother, Ronetta's personal experiences have fueled her passion for helping children and families overcome obstacles to learning.

**Dr. Stacey Wilson-Norman** *(Wake County Public School System)*

Dr. Stacey Wilson-Norman is the Chief Academic Advancement Officer for the Wake County Public School System. Previously, she was Chief Academic Officer for Cumberland County Schools and Deputy Superintendent of Academic Services for Durham County Schools. She has also served as Co-Chair of the Durham Partnership for Children. With extensive experience in Pre-K, Dr. Wilson-Norman understands the critical role early childhood education plays in a child's success. She would like to leverage her expertise in strategic management, stakeholder relations, advocacy, and cultural competence to support WCSS's mission.

